

This road leading home—through the security
check, jet din, past concrete fields,

yaupons and banana fronds, to this
fiefdom of regret, dotted

with petite tract castles—ends in an
old routine, the clearing away, the ritual

refusal that greets an offer
to wash the dishes. The closet doors swing

shut. There is a decorum. Put out
the light, let love fill the dark.

Condensation / Stephen Sandy

A wisp of straw hangs from
the apple branch. On his window
condensation blurs his
view, couples walking by the
river. Apples, spilled by the wall.

This autumn plenty. There,
white noise from the heart. And no one
to hear the old voices,
the singing. The cricket crutches
moonward from the cooling hearth. This

small clamor in his blood
is somehow some small knowledge of
his child: which will become
a protean encroachment on
the petty dark of solitude.

Possession is nine-tenths
of the disenchantment. The hills
go platinum with frost.

He could remember keeping score,
all those affections in a row

then letting them go. And
letting go, he let time alone.
Only the windy young
have nothing in common, although
they share findings. They find common

cause against calendars
and fear another hand on the
misted pane where, smiling,
a girl peers in on them, a gold
leaf in her damp, night-tangled hair.

North Winter, Crocodile / Diane Furtney

There is a crowded stifle
inside the country bus.
The crocodile,
out on the open, riverbottom
ice fields
that ravine and hump enough
to suit its purposes,
has already gorged
and is softening its gray gut
in the sun.
It will be hunting later
under the edge-trees
in the distance,
snouting between the blue weeds,
its thick lids adjusted
slit against the flat
winter wind. We know
the scrape of its back
claws in the ice
can leave the light streaks